

PRESIDENT MOUL: Thank you, Senator Rasmussen. Senator Wesely, followed by Senators Hohenstein and Moore.

SENATOR WESELY: Thank you, Madam President, and members, I rise in support of the amendment. LB 531 is the bill that we're dealing with here, so if you want to look...if you're concerned, you can look in your bill book. That bill was heard by the Health and Human Services Committee and the bill was advanced unanimously. And it should be a consent calendar bill but it did have a committee amendment, so it's a little ways down on General File and it would be a real loss not to have this legislation passed. It deals with an oversight in the statutes, in my view, since we've opened up adoption process. Generally, this particular bill deals with wards of the Department of Social Services and this will help facilitate some long standing problems we have with those wards where the parents need to relinquish custody and need to give up and give an opportunity for others to adopt those children if you give them a home that will be more suitable for them. At the same time, obviously, the parents have a love for their children, want to keep in contact with their children, and this bill will allow for that, will allow for those type of arrangements where somebody is reluctant to release the child for adoption but if there can be an arrangement so they can keep in touch and that contact can occur then they feel more comfortable. I think it's a very important bill. I don't know of any opposition to it. I don't see any problem at this time with it and it does relate to the other piece of legislation. So I hope you will give Senator Rasmussen a chance and adopt the amendment and I, too, would be happy to answer questions. But if you're concerned about the bill, it did come through committee easily with a very strong show of support at the hearing, and would ask for your support for the amendment at this time.

PRESIDENT MOUL: Thank you, Senator Wesely. Senator Hohenstein.

SENATOR HOHENSTEIN: Madam President and members of the body, I've got a...since I'm new down here, I've got a couple of procedural questions which, I guess, weren't really answered. We had a debate some time ago, I think it was yesterday, and at that stage we talked about doing, I think, about the same thing we're doing to this bill on an amendment only it wasn't at Final Reading, it was at a different stage of the proceedings, and in that case we had an amendment that was offered by Senator Schmitt which, in that form, I think the committee Chairman,